



Supplemental Activities for the CDC Cooperative Agreement

HARMONIZING TECHNICAL APPROACHES TO IMPROVE NATIONAL HIV SURVEILLANCE CAPACITY IN THE CARIBBEAN

PAHO HIV CARIBBEAN OFFICE

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Background:

The Caribbean Region is considered to have the second highest rate of infection in the world, with an estimated adult prevalence of 1.0%¹. The burden of the epidemic varies from country to country, and according to the UNAIDS Report for 2010, new infections have slightly declined within the period 2001-2009². While the region has collectively strived to strengthen HIV care and treatment, the Caribbean has the biggest treatment gap in the Americas.³ Knowing the HIV/AIDS Epidemics is essential for the required results based approach urgently needed in the Region to reduce the treatment gap and prevent new infections.

In 2008 the Caucus of Minister responsible for Health of the CARICOM approved the PAHO HIV Caribbean Plan for the Health Sector and requested PAHO to intensify technical cooperation in the Caribbean. One of the four Critical Lines of Action is that of strengthening Strategic Information to improve the overall Health System's Response to the HIV Epidemic.

Based on gap analysis, and taking into consideration changes in the external environment, PAHO (PHCO and CAREC), identified the following methodological approaches:

- a) Regional action for technical consensus building, standardization of reporting and capacity building. A Technical Working Group on Surveillance which convenes experts and technical partners in the Caribbean Region (including PANCAP, UNAIDS, CDC, NGO and MOH representatives) was established in 2009. In addition, CAREC has organized two annual meetings of the National Epidemiologists and Laboratory Directors in the last four years.
- b) Intensify direct in country support for the production of high quality surveillance and programmatic reports and use of data for decision making
- c) Foster technical cooperation among countries
- d) Strategic Alliances and Partnerships to improve SI, particularly surveillance and patient monitoring systems.

In this context, PAHO has strengthened the ongoing collaboration with the CDC Caribbean Team, as one of the key stakeholders providing technical assistance and resources to Caribbean Countries to improve Strategic Information.

Building upon this collaboration, two critical activities have been identified for the period November 1, 2011 to August 31 2012 which will require supplemental budget:

1. Provide regional leadership support for the harmonization of technical approaches and implementation of agreed upon standards for HIV surveillance.
2. Technical support to countries for the development of quality Universal Access Reports

A description and budget is presented in Table 1. Management of funds will be within the PAHO/WHO organizational structure and responsibility for overall coordination, implementation and reporting is under the Senior Advisor HIV/STI Caribbean Office.

Table 1: SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET REQUEST (January 01 to June 14, 2012)

¹ UNAIDS 2010 Global Report

² ibid

³ PAHO/WHO 3 x 5 Report

Description of Activities

Activity 1: Provide regional leadership support for the harmonization of technical approaches and implementation of agreed upon standards for HIV surveillance.

1.1 Two meetings of the Caribbean Technical Working Group (TWG) for Surveillance.

One face-to-face meeting of the TWG will be held in April 2012. It will be organized around a specific topic to generate consensus, and will produce guidance notes to be distributed and circulated to partners. The topics will be selected in consultation with CDC Caribbean Team and based on the recommendations of the last meeting of the technical working group. Special attention will be given to consensus building on standardization of surveys, sustainability of National Surveillance Systems, and regional reporting/analysis.

1.2. Technical support to countries in partnership with CDC Caribbean Team for the evaluation of surveillance systems and implementation of SOPs and National Actions Plans for Surveillance.

PAHO (PHCO-CAREC) has developed a set of tools (attached for easy reference), to conduct readiness assessments and develop SOPs to improve HIV Surveillance Systems. These tools will be utilized to support countries in conducting assessments of their Systems, develop national SOPs and action plans to improve surveillance. PAHO (PHCO-CAREC) will provide in country technical support and also follow up technical support will be required during the implementation of the SOPs and action plan, to identify bottlenecks and provide hands on training/capacity building. Two countries will be selected in discussion with the CDC Caribbean Team. **Budget includes travel and per diem for two individuals and at least two visits per country.**

1.3. Support PHCO HR capacity for regional standardization of HIV Case-based surveillance and coordination of technical working group

PHCO hired an Epidemiologist to coordinate the establishment, standardization and implementation of the regional reporting systems. This professional acts as facilitator of the Technical Working Group on Surveillance and is responsible for regional analysis and the production of reports. The Epidemiologist (Short-term Professional, P4 level) is stationed in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Fifty percent (50%) of staff time will be required for the implementation of the activities under the supplementary funds. Administrative support for effective implementation of supplementary funds will also be required (50% staff time). A G4- level administrative assistant will provide support for obligation of funds, travel arrangements and accommodation and assistance with the organization of meetings. **PAHO will cover 50% of the remuneration of both positions and the other 50% will be provided through the Supplemental Budget for the one-year period.**

1.4. Conduct meta-analysis of Health Systems Evaluation's conducted by PAHO/WHO and finalize report

PAHO/WHO has conducted six evaluations of the Health System's response to HIV in the Caribbean. One key component of the Evaluation is the area of Strategic Information (as per WHO six Health System's building blocks). A meta-analysis of these evaluations will provide significant information on common gaps and challenges, as well as key recommendations to inform a policy dialogue on sustainability of the Health System's Response to HIV. In addition, main gaps and challenges as it relates to existing Surveillance and M&E systems will be highlighted. A consultant will be contracted to develop the meta-analysis of Health Systems Evaluations. This financial resource is complimentary funding in collaboration with PANCAP.

Activity 2: Technical support to countries for the development of quality Universal Access reports

2.1 Direct support to countries in partnership with CDC Caribbean Team for the development of quality Universal Access Report

Support will be provided, by a team of PAHO/CAREC Epidemiologists, in collaboration with CDC Caribbean Office, to the MOH/National AIDS Programmes to organize a consensus meeting with Ministry of Health Focal Point/Team, other national governments and partners and the UNAIDS, UNICEF and PAHO Focal Points to cross-validate country data including validation of the accuracy and completeness of data for annual Universal Access Report. PAHO (PHCO-CAREC) will provide in country technical at the consensus meetings and provide hands on training/capacity building. **Budget includes travel and per diem for two individuals to at least three countries.**